/13 cont./

862 At the stage when the child is too young to feed himself, it is usually the mother who feeds him or one of the relatives (aunt, grandmother, or siblings). Also, he may be helped by female servants entrusted to look after him, who coach him so that he may learn to feed himself.

827 853 755 If, after the delivery and before the milk appears, the woman should have inflamed and painful breasts, the husband must place his bare foot on them for a short time in order to make the swelling disappear. When the milk is delayed, they beat the shoulders of the mother with a herb which has the property of producing a milky substance in abundance. Quick and safe results are also obtained by using an infusion of vira-vira.

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853 The Guajiro mother may be obliged to ask for assistance in the natural feeding of her child: a) when, after delivery, for some pathological reason she cannot feed him because her milk has dried up; b) because she has previously lost several children of a very early age due to gastroenteritis, which is attributed to nutritive deficiency in her milk or to something in it which makes it unhealthy; c) when she has had twins, and she feels unable to feed both children; d) when the mother's milk suddenly begins to become scarce while the child is very small.

In such circumstances she looks for a wet nurse, not because she refuses to feed the child since, as far as we were able to find out, the mother wants to do it herself and considers her maternity frustrated when circumstances force her to find another mother to substitute for her, but because necessity drives her to do so in order to save the child from starvation and death. Apart from the /14/ loving care and the pleasure she feels in fulfilling this function, there are various reasons which induce her to feed her child naturally: Scarcity of milk in a poor mother involves a hardship in rearing the child as she does not always have goat's milk (the best milk in their opinion) available, and

/151 cont./

56 mission, which is to buy bond servants and slaves, educate them, and then return their lost freedom.

Center of forced bond service and centers of sale. The Sierra de Jarara is the region where bond service most commonly originates, because of the obligatory loss of personal freedom that results when not able to fulfill a pending obligation or pay a debt, or when a poor native, during the summer (which because of geophysical conditions is more severe here than in the rest of the peninsula), is forced by hunger to steal animals. The injured party is paid by taking away from the thief, who has no other means of paying damages, a boy or girl, usually his maternal nephew or niece.

On the other hand, the major sale center and the true distribution market for bond servants is Maicao, because of its being in Lower La Guajira which is another of the Guajira regions which suffers most cruelly from long summers and in which women do not have the economic resources which those of Upper La Guajira have, such as supplying /traders with/ woven articles, but have to live without /productive/ employment /of any sort/, and in consequence without means of supporting themselves and their families. For these reasons mothers are forced to sell both their unmarried daughters as bond servants and their younger children. The fact of Maicao's being on the only commercial route between Venezuela and Colombia is also a contributing factor. /152/

/153/ IX

SICKNESS AND DEATH

755 "...in the aspect of Guajiro medical treatment there are four different factors which we can define in principle as follows:

1. Medicine exercised directly by the shaman through his communication with benevolent spirits.

/153 cont.

755 2. Medicine through divination, dependent or independent of the shaman and which creates another social position not very well defined: that of diviner.

3. Medicine which we might call home treatment, independent both of the shaman and the diviner, which is applied through the pragmatic knowledge of the curative properties of plants, by observation of certain customs related to taboo and which, as we shall see later, are of the preventative type.

4. Medicine as practiced by foreigners. This last factor must have had its origin in historic ethnography, and it seems to us to be difficult to classify. It deals with the medical intervention of the curanderos /curers/ of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, to whom, on certain occasions, the Guajiro Indians go for treatment...(1)."

1. Cf. Pineda Giraldo, Roberto: Aspectos de la magia en la Guajira, IV - 52 and 53 in Revista del Instituto Etnológico Nacional, VI, III, No. 1. Bogotá, 1950.

[757] For these reasons when a Guajiro child becomes sick, if his relatives are well-to-do they send for a woman diviner to determine the causes of the illness and to prescribe the corresponding curative system. When the patient is an adult and his illness shows no serious symptoms, they call in the herbalists (women who know the curative properties of certain plants), or they use their personal knowledge, that is, what we call "home" cures. If it is a matter of a serious chronic illness, they will most certainly use the services of a curandero of the Arhuaco /Cagaba/ tribe (Indians of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta), whom the relatives of the sick man go to see, or the latter himself if it is possible. This curandero supplies

/153 cont./

755 him with a series of magic remedies and medicinal plants which have been fully described in the article /154/ previously cited. Also at the present time it is not uncommon for them to call in the services of a white doctor, either in Uribia, the capital of the peninsula, or in the near-by cities of Venezuela, such as Maracaibo, or in the neighboring Colombian department of Magdalena.

But their culture possesses a traditional institution that 756 answers these requirements: the shaman, whose essential 755 activity has been fully treated in the work which we cited at 177 the beginning of this chapter and to which we refer the reader. This institution, perhaps the most powerful in Guajiro culture, has been losing value for various reasons already studied in the article we have cited, but it still occupies an outstanding place within the social and cultural whole, to the point that when an Indian is gravely ill, his relatives think immediately of the shaman as the most advisable means of curing the sick man, as this functionary (the shaman) possesses considerable magic powers due to his having been selected by the benevolent spirits to be their intermediary in their frequent contacts with the community. For this reason, to obtain the aid of the shaman is to have in one's favor the friendship and co-operation of the well-wishing spirits who can save the patient from death, [763] because for the Guajiro, illness is caused by the action of pernicious spirits who want to cause harm and to avenge themselves.

755 The first necessary condition for the shaman to take charge [431] of the cure is the gift to him of a piece of jewelry, an ornament of gold, generally a necklace, /the value of/ which should be in relation to the family status of the patient as well as the standing of the shaman. A second condition is the tacit submission to the shaman's demands and instructions.

The shaman, once he has decided to take charge of the cure of the patient, goes to his house and submits the sick man to the customary ritual. His practices, which last several

/154 cont./

755 days and can even be drawn out for months, are a mixture of incantations and invocations, accompanied by canticles; massages with spittle mixed with chewed tobacco; sucking of the painful parts of the sick man's body; the application of his empirical knowledge of the medicinal use of plants; and the propitiation of the spirits of sickness and of death -- wanurú -- by means of gifts which the patient or his relatives supply in order to obtain the victorious return of the patient's spirit to his body and with this his definite cure. As soon as he has secured this objective, the shaman calls for the celebration of a feast. /155/

If on arriving to give his services, the shaman can see, by some magic process which he explains, that there is no hope for the sick man, he will withdraw. For the patient there is no other possibility open but to wait for death -- which usually occurs shortly after.

755 782 It is also up to the shaman to decide what sacrifices should be offered to propitiate the adverse spirits when these are preparing a harmful incident for a Guajiro. Generally, this harmful incident implicitly involves the death of the individual who, with the sacrifices and propitiations recommended by the shaman, will counteract the action, canceling it. If the recommendation is not followed, the prediction will be fulfilled. Guajiro tradition narrates among many cases the following: An old female shaman foretold a Pushaina (1)

1. Pushaina: name of a Guajiro clan.

individual that he would die at the hands of a member of his own clan and that a series of bloody events would occur as a consequence of his death. To avoid these happenings she told him he would have to make a sacrifice of several animals and bathe himself with their blood. The suggestion was not followed, and every one of the calamities occurred just as the shaman had forecast.

/155 cont./

755 Any person who dreams of a future happening and the ways of avoiding it can predict in place of the shaman. During our stay in Uribia a chicha-maya dance took place, and a series of propitiatory sacrifices were made which were repeated for three nights. The mother of a Guajiro dreamt that her son would be killed by the husband of a woman with whom he was maintaining illicit relations.

It can happen that the shaman practices his curative system and his efforts do not have the hoped-for result. When death occurs, the shaman withdraws after returning the presents that his spirit had demanded, if his treatment was ineffective. In many cases, however, he keeps them for himself when he 764 can find an excuse to justify his failure. As soon as the relatives learn of the death of the sick man, they rapidly cover him and leave him in peace for about half an hour, so that his spirit before going to the place where he will live henceforth may "retrace his steps," that is to say, may roam about among the places familiar to him and say good-by to his friends and relatives. During these moments the persons visited by him feel his presence, which is manifested in some manner and lets them understand by various means the object of his visit. When this time has passed, his whole body is bathed with water and soap; mostly his closest relatives take part in this operation, men and women, in the maternal line and after them the affinal relatives (wife, sons-in-law, and /156/ daughters-in-law). After being bathed the corpse is carefully dried, and if it is a woman her face is covered with paint of the color and kind which she preferred when living because, as she is going visiting according to their belief, she should comply with this precept of etiquette since, if not, she might feel ashamed on meeting her friends and relatives. The paint is also intended to protect her from the action of the sun's rays on the long trip she has to make. They adorn her with all the jewelry she possessed. If she had a large number of earrings, for example, all of them must be

[17 cont.]
carrying out his function as community curer, and witch so that he will be able to act with certainty in curing illnesses, in the propitiation of the rainfall indispensable for good harvests, as well as in his tasks of keeping away pestilences and epidemics which could decimate the people under his care.

As has been seen in the section treating the period of training, this is limited first of all to transmitting to the new shaman the most successful way of insuring that the spirit can reach him. His science in no manner implies that he possess knowledge relating to the medicinal value of plants, of animals, etc., but it does imply that the process of apprenticeship, or better said his science, [18] is based on the successful invocation of the spirit, which has the true wisdom, which is the only curer in reality, the all-powerful able to propitiate rain and cast out pestilences and epidemics and whose science is manifested through the medium of the medicine man whenever the spirit wishes to carry out its designs. The shaman by himself and for himself is worthless. He is an ordinary man, subject as are others to the evil influences of the spirits of sickness and death. His fundamental value rests in the absorption into himself of a powerful spirit which places him on a footing of equality with the spirits of the other world, and in many cases even on a superior one, when it enables him frequently to emerge triumphant in the cure of sickness.

One has to emphasize in the personality of the Guajiro shaman the fact that he has almost exclusively the function of making contact with the supernatural world, and it is by this means that he endeavors to effect the cure of his patients. He is partially or totally ignorant of medicine based on herbs, animals, parts of animals, or any other type of cure other than that exercised directly by the protector spirits that use him as their intermediary.

As will be seen in the corresponding chapters, the majority of child cures are effected by female diviners with the indicated methods, which are based on what is called participative or contaminant magic. Also, the herbs actually very few -- which are used to cause abortion, to restrict the growth of the fetus,

[18 cont.]
to bring on lactation, to gain weight, etc., are partly public knowledge and partly privately known by a few families who traditionally preserve the secret of their use for their personal benefit.

By what has been previously stated we see how the ceremony of healing is a perpetual invocation of the spirit, a continual fear that it might withdraw its aid for whatever motive, and a perennial anxiety to satisfy its slightest wish in order to obtain the success sought. To give evidence for this we shall see how the Guajiro shaman effects a cure when he has been called in to handle one.

First of all, before he initiates such activities, he demands a gift. For this reason whenever a native needs the services of the shaman for magico-medical attention for some relative, he goes to present himself to the shaman with a gold necklace or some other valuable present.

Each time the shaman goes to cure a sick person he takes with him two maracas. This custom is rather widespread in South America, where the magic power of the maraca appears to be extraordinary and is commonly accepted, although with some variations from tribe to tribe whether in the [19] quality of its different parts, in the artifacts adornment, in the manner of using it, etc. To corroborate this it is sufficient to quote Professor Méraux again, who says, in reference to the apprentice shaman: "During his initiation the novice learns to make use of the accessories indispensable to the magic art. The most important of all, that which in some manner symbolizes the profession is the maraca or rattle made from a calabash containing some seeds or pebbles and provided with a handle." (15) [Cited in French.]

15. Méraux. Op. cit., I, 217.

The medicine man accommodates himself in a seat especially reserved for such occasions and carved in wood in the form of an animal, but if such an artifact is lacking, he will use any convenient seat. The custom of using a seat of this type is also found in the Guianas. "The wooden seat is an equally indispensable accessory for the shaman of the Guianas. It is often carved in the form of a jaguar, an animal that plays an important part in the

171 [19 cont.]
*756 invocations of the spirits and in the metamorphosis of the shaman."
755 (16) [Cited in French.] The shaman moves his torso in gyra-

16. Ibid., I, 218.

tion. When he is in trance and effecting a cure which requires the invocation of the spirit, no noise must be made as this will cause the spirit to become frightened and to flee; and being left without his protector spirit, the shaman will suffer violent
[276] fits and fall to the ground in severe convulsions. The shaman always carries a piece of manilla in these cases; he chews it and becomes intoxicated with the juice, which induces him to sing with greater verve. The juice of the manilla also serves to spray
[824] the body of the patient as well as the walls and all around the house to frighten away the malignant spirit. This custom of the magic use of tobacco is also very common in America; not to overexpand the subject we limit ourselves to giving a simple example cited by Pauly with reference to the Araona Indians of Bolivia: "They use tobacco dust mixed with coca to cure their sick and ward off the evil spirits, chewing it and spitting the juice on the body of the sick person. They also spit it at the heavens to calm the storms and at the river when it is in flood." (17)

[113]

17. Pauly, Antonio. Ensayo de Etnografía Americana. Viajes y Exploraciones [Essay on American Ethnology. Voyages and Explorations], VI, 128.

755 The treatment really begins with a chant of invocation to the spirits. While the ceremony is performed the shaman continually chews tobacco and he rubs the juice formed by the saliva and the juice of the plant over the body of the patient; and immediately after this, he energetically sucks several consecutive times at the affected parts of the body of the sick man to draw
[753] out [20] the malignancy. (The sickness that the native has, no matter what may be its special characteristics or from whence it may have arisen, is derived from the malevolent action of the

[20 cont.]

755 wanurú spirits of the dead, who have arrows similar to those used
[753] by the Indians for hunting, which are shot at individuals to cause them sickness and pain.) The chant of the shaman is suspended only while he is sucking the affected parts of the sick person's body; then he immediately continues it again and returns to the spitting, the rubbing, and the sucking of the painful areas. The
755 sick person should be confined to his home, and furthermore his
758 bed should be enclosed by curtains in the manner of a second room within the main one. None may enter this place without the express consent of the shaman. However, the witch sometimes permits the presence of a relative of the sick person, generally the sister or the wife, who can act as nurse, especially during the moments when the shaman is resting. When he renews his curative acts, they must withdraw again.

755 The songs which the shaman intones tell how his spirit is
753 searching for the soul of the sick man which the spirit of sick-
[533] ness and death has carried away to unknown regions which are known only to it and to the spirit of the shaman. Often the sick person's spirit does not let itself be caught by the shaman, or it can happen that his soul is imprisoned, held by act and wish of the wanurú, which can cause the shaman a great deal of work. When through the intervention of his protector spirit he succeeds in recovering the spirit of the patient, he must pay the
755 wanurú that held it prisoner a ransom for its liberation. This
782 spirit will then ask through the mouth of the shaman for whatever gifts it may fancy. The shaman on his part transmits the oppressing spirit's demands to the sick man's relatives. These demands take the form of requests for animals — cattle, goats, sheep, etc., — of a certain color and special markings; ornaments of certain sizes and shapes; cloth, food and, at times, things very difficult to find. The sick man's relatives hurry to look everywhere for the requested items, and once found they present them to the shaman and place them, if they are animals, near him where he is "shamanizing." Other objects, such as
*756 necklaces, cloth, etc., are placed in his hands. If the orders
755 are not immediately complied with and in accordance with the slightest detail, the shaman suffers very severe fits and attacks and has to withdraw from assisting the patient. This is because,

[20 cont.]

*1756 as he is only the spirit's intermediary in the matter of the
1755 negotiation between it and the patient and his relatives to free
● the sick man from its influence, the shaman must respond to all the demands that the spirit has made. If the sick man is cured, the shaman keeps all the gifts that were requested through him by the spirit that caused the sickness and those that his protector [21] spirit claimed for its part in the cure. If the treatment is not successful, it is usual for all gifts to be returned to the patient's relatives, although sometimes this is not done and the shaman takes possession of them, stating that they are sacred, that they belong to the spirits that intervened in the attempt at curing the sick man although this has not been successful.

Shamans state that when they are practicing their curing ceremonies, while they are endeavoring to wrest the patient's soul from its prison, they are carefully observing the sick man to determine whether his cure is possible or not. If it is obvious that it is not, they declare him past hope, after being well assured that the individual cannot be saved and after making sure that everything has been done to effect his cure. They also state
*1756 that it is quite common when they are engaged in the exercise
1755 of their functions for their spirits to chat freely with them, at
1787 which times they refer to events which are about to happen and to their own destiny in the other life, in other words, what the shaman will be doing as a spirit once he ultimately dies. It is common to hear a spirit say, while conversing with the shaman in trance, "When you die you will know a country where there are many towns you know not of, crossed by wide, blue rivers."

Before proceeding further we consider it of interest to call attention to these latter words which the shaman claims he hears from his protector spirit, as they represent, in a certain way, the idea of a special heaven for these curers, a notion of life beyond the tomb which we shall see in greater detail later and, above all, the image of that new life; towns...crossed by wide, blue rivers, an ideal as logical as any when one takes into account the geographical situation of La Guajira, a land in which rivers and ravines, or even minor arroyos, are practically unknown due to the winds that dominate the peninsula.

[21cont.]

●755 796 When the patient shows signs of improving, a fiesta is organized consisting of chicha-maya dances and feasting. For this event they prepare in advance all that will be offered to the participants; chicha made from chewed corn, plain or sweetened with panela according to the economic situation of the sick man's family. The dance lasts one or more days and nights, as ordered [534] by the shaman, the only musical instrument used being the drum. In order to end the fiesta, two or three steers and several goats and sheep are killed if the hosts are rich. At four or five o'clock in the morning, according to the shaman's wishes, the sick person is taken from his bed, and the curer himself bathes him with [515] soap and water, after which he is again carried indoors and is permitted to stay up, but not to leave his dwelling. Slowly he resumes normal living and the everyday diet. If the patient should have a relapse, [22] the treatment is repeated. The process of these cures may last up to two months, according to the patient's condition.

No one is actually invited to the fiesta which is organized [574] by order of the shaman when he has succeeded in curing a patient. When people find out that such a fiesta is about to be given from the characteristic beating of the drum, they approach without being invited and take part, joining in dancing [273] the chich-amaya. The women are offered a bowl of chicha made from chewed corn to take to their homes to drink there with their families. Men are given rum or chicha. The women wear with 291 great pride their long ample robes, which cover them to the 755 ankles, their waireñas, or leather sandals with toe pieces made 796 of knitted wool and adorned with large tassels of the same ma- 556 terial, and a pañuelo around their heads, the corners of which hang down their backs. If they are wealthy enough, they complete their personal adornment with anklets and bracelets of coral and necklaces of gold or tuma. The men also wear their finest robes, which, hanging from one of their shoulders, cover the upper part of their bodies. This is complemented by a wide sash used to support the loincloth [guayuco], wider than the one commonly used, that is, than that used in their daily 755 work. If animals are sacrificed – which depends on the wealth 796

●755 [22 cont.]
796 of the patient or of his family – then those attending are presented with a good portion of meat.

*756 Shamanistic treatment of animals. When pestilence
231 breaks out among a Guajiro Indian's animals, he has no other known recourse to repel it than to seek the services of a shaman.
755 As he already knows in a way the accustomed ceremonial in such cases, he prepares days beforehand a sufficient quantity of corn chicha, which is used in the chicha-maya dances, and he invites a large group of women to come to the dance. He then calls in the shaman, who, once arrived on the scene, has all the animals collected and enclosed in a large corral. While this operation is being carried out, the shaman begins to prepare himself for the ceremony, inviting his protector spirit to cast out the pestilence, and dressing himself (or better said, undressing himself) in a neighboring hut as is customary for the ceremony of the cure of human beings, keeping on his loincloth if he is a man and her dress if a woman. He then places a crown of wool on his head and readies the maraca, which he keeps in his hand during the entire event. Following this, he enters the place where the animals are, goes in among them, and turns himself around in circles about them, continually shaking the maraca and spitting on their bodies the juice from the manilla he is continually chewing. During all this time, he intones his ritual invocatory chants, [23] which are different from those used for the cure of humans, and he never stops shaking the maraca. This operation generally lasts for several days and is only suspended for those moments when the shaman rests. When he considers that the evil spirits which have caused the pestilence have been successfully driven off, he suspends his activities and orders for the fiesta to begin, which is started by the sacrifice of an animal, the distribution of chicha to those present, and the dance. The animals are driven to the fields while numerous gunshots are [77] fired (in older times arrows were shot off). These are intended [784] to complete the work of the shaman in driving off the evil spirits of the disease.

*756 Shamans' dreams. When a shaman dreams of a long trip
787 through unknown territory, it is an evident sign that he is due to [761] die. When the dream is over, he attempts through "shamanizing"

[23 cont.]

*756 787 to divine his future by means of a firebrand, and sees that it does not burn or blaze. His spirit has abandoned him and no longer comes at his call. Finally, the spirit descends to him and says, "This has happened to you because you did not obey me on such-and-such an occasion."

Up to now there are two clear examples of the relation between unknown lands and death in the case of the shaman. Let us recall the talks held between the shaman and his protector spirit during the ceremony for curing a sick person, in which the protector spirit describes to him a marvelous country crossed by wide, blue rivers as a dwelling place to enter after death. Now this same representation reappears in his dream, which implies a vision of the world beyond the tomb to which he will shortly go.

● [755] If during a curing ceremony he should dream that at some time during the dance which he has demanded for the total rehabilitation of the sick man he sees a group of rich Indian women arrive mounted on horses, bringing with them in a pitcher a small quantity of water or rum with which they bathe the sick person and then blow on him at midnight, this means that the sick man in question will recover completely and will not have a relapse.

751 *756 787 At other times the shaman may dream that someone is going to be killed. To avert the danger he goes to the relatives of the person dreamed of to order them to perform a sacrifice or ceremony such as the following. They must bring a heifer of a certain color, slaughter it at dawn, and bathe in its blood the Indian on whom the tragedy is to fall according to the dream. To end the ceremony they must hold a chicha-maya dance. The Indian referred to must follow strictly the orders of the shaman [24] otherwise, there is no doubt that a tragedy will befall him, so the natives affirm. (Cf. "Magic and Sacrifice.")

There is a story, for example, of a female shaman who dreamed that she should "shamanize" an Indian woman with rum and hold a chicha-maya dance, or otherwise death would rapidly overtake her. The woman of the dream did not obey the orders of the shaman, and a few days later she had a quarrel with her husband, who struck her, and, broken-hearted over her husband's action, she hung herself from a tree at midnight. [762]

[27 cont.]
*756 turpirawa, muchirawai, males; and anapaura, uríwatana, waré-
775 ké-narú, waiwána, and parárijuna, females.
776 The common spirit of sickness and death, wanurú, in its
malignant sense, can be possessed by a shaman, but its possession
[755] implies dangers as because of it the shaman can become insane,
foolish, or paralytic. It is such an aggressive, haughty, and hate-
ful spirit that, when it turns against a shaman, does so so vin-
dictively that he is compelled to ask all the other spirits to aid
him against the jirairay or wanarú.

But shamans do not know the origin of the spirits in the majority of cases. They do not know from where they come, only that they come from an unknown place, dressed like arŕjuna (civilizados). They are wanurú that assist them in the struggle against sickness, which is also called wanurú. The personal spirit of the shaman, as we have said, does not intervene directly in the healing. It is those other spirits, the ones that have taken possession of him ever since he was initiated into the magic arts, which do so. His personal spirit does not have a special name, nor does the personal spirit of any of the Indians. Only on the shaman's death does his spirit take the common name wanurú and a special one if he has been a very outstanding curer.

In general terms, two other classes of spirits exist: that of the shaman himself, of which we have already spoken, and that of the diviner. These two spirits, however, can be absorbed by one person, but this absorption requires two special preparations, one for each activity. The more common procedure is for the shaman to be a diviner also, as this will help him considerably in carrying out his functions, for, on being [28] called to accomplish a cure, he can by means of his prophetic art consult with the firebrand or the tobacco (Cf. "Magic and Medicine") and find out if the sick person in question will recover. In accordance with the results of his findings, he will or will not try to cure him.

114 Referring to prophecy, Uricoechea in his introduction to
787 Celedón's Guajiro Grammar refutes — we do not know on what authority — the statement of Ensign de la Rosa when the latter states that the Indians divine by means of tobacco, and says:

[30 cont.]

*756 262 for his services as a curer; the flesh of animals sacrificed during anyone's wake or during the ceremony of the second burial, especially if it is the remains of a shaman which are to be exhumed; ordinary food during the days on which he is carrying out his profession when he should limit himself to a small portion of corn mazamorro [cooked crushed corn] and water. Hence, the cattle [423] he receives at his spirit's request in exchange for his cures are used in an indirect manner, being kept for breeding purposes.

171 262 *756 We also find that the food taboo among shamans is characteristic among the Cashinawa Indians, according to the text published by Capistrano de Abreu and cited by Métraux. According to them the souls (spirits) say to the initiate: "I have innoculated you with the magic substance. Do not, therefore, eat carelessly any sort of nourishment or you will lose your magic power (feitiço). Eat sparingly. Drink soup, eat cooked bananas and fish. Eat nothing but that!"

They say: "When you do not eat [sic]. Do not eat the tapir, do not eat the deer, do not eat the peccary, do not eat jaguar, do not eat nambú, do not eat the jaeau, do not eat the cujubin, do not eat the coati, do not eat the guariba, do not eat the monkey. These are the foods that you may not eat. If you do eat them [31] we will kill you, say the spirits. Among vegetables do not eat sweet potatoes, sweet manioc, or the innames." (25) [Cited in French.]

25. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 204.

*756 422 [428] So far as the other objects that the shaman receives as payment for his work, neither may he use these directly. He simply keeps them, or he gives them to his children [hijos] as he does with the cattle. These objects, if they are not handed over while he is alive, will be divided up after his death among his heirs in accordance with Guajiro customary law....

*756 ● 765 Death of a shaman. When a shaman becomes ill he has to call in a colleague to practice on him all the ceremonies and rites indispensable for fending off the illness, since curers have the power to cure others but are not able to cure themselves.

[31 cont.]

753 755 756 776 If the shaman's illness and the announcement of his death are provoked by the displeasure of his protector spirit, there generally is no possibility of calling in another shaman to carry out the ceremonies of curing. The illness of the shaman more than being his alone is an illness of the protector spirit; it is thus different from all other illnesses known to the natives. The shaman himself cannot help; he does not know how to apply the remedies he may have used in similar cases. He only, and this on few occasions, applies hot water to his chest. At other times the spirit may have pity on him and may come and recommend some special remedy to him, indicating at the same time where he can obtain it. The sick shaman then takes the remedy, and his sickness is immediately alleviated.

*756 766 On the death of a shaman it is obligatory to hold a wake for at least three consecutive days, because the attacks which shamans have ("states of ecstasy") are so frequent and on occasion prolonged for a considerable time, that there is the possibility that he may not be really dead. The natives, then, do not wish to give a shaman burial until they are convinced of his death. There is also the belief that when such persons die they do not follow the same cycle as other mortals, since their bodies do not become hard and stiff but remain soft and lax, as if they were only sleeping. At the conclusion of these three obligatory days of the wake, they carry him away for burial. They wash the body and fasten his shroud as they do for others. But his crown, his maraca, and all his clothes are first broken and torn and later buried in a special place in the woods, or are thrown away in a lonely place. They must not place these objects with him in his grave [32] because the spirit of the dead shaman would return, very angry with the persons who had done such a thing, and would punish their disrespect in some form or another.

*756 775 787 The dead shaman's spirit wanders everywhere like all other spirits, it goes to the place where his body lived, to places well known to it, but it is always accompanied by its protector spirit, from which it will never become separated. Both the protector spirit and its protege may descend on a new shaman in order to assist him. This is probably the explanation of the possession of

[35 cont.]

*756 their protection to him. When he is performing the ceremonial
775 indispensable for freeing the body and soul of a patient from the clutches of the wanurú, he represents nothing but the role of intermediary between two worlds and especially between two classes of spirits — that of his protector who wishes to save the sick person and that of others now dead who desire above all
[753] that the evil they have caused the person of the sick man should continue until it ends with his death, so that in this way they can avenge an offense received, or simply satisfy some capricious wish of their own, as beings capable — because of their position as inhabitants of another world, a position superior to everything we can imagine in this mortal universe — of doing any harm they wish.

●755 This position of intermediary is clearly shown in the cere-
*756 mony of curing. The communication must be made through definite material objects which take on in their turn the character of untouchables: the maraca, the crown, the tassels which contain a representation of goat dung, and the tobacco or manilla, objects which cannot be used by others but only by shamans during their moments of trance or invocation; the solitude to which the curer submits himself during his invocations, with only his patient present, for fear that the protector spirit might disappear and refuse to give aid in the cure which the shaman is trying to effect; his protector spirit's demands for certain objects to satisfy the voracity of harmful spirits or its own, demands which must be complied with to the letter; the ritual chants which relate the different moments of agreement between the harmful spirits and that of the shaman; the sacrifice of an animal determined by the spirit — male goat, sheep, etc. — as recompense for the spirit's favors; and lastly, the expressed prohibition that rests on the shaman not to eat or use the [36] animals or objects that he receives in payment for his cures. All these are facts which clearly indicate that the shaman is no more than an intermediary or an earthly representative of the spirits of good, or even of evil, and above all of the dead shamans who wish to continue exerting their beneficial influence on the group to which they belonged in life.

171 This function of communication with the spirits, annexed
*756 to, and inseparable from, the personality of the medicine man,
787

[41 cont.]

764 1. The first of these types refers to the custom established among them of sacrificing, during the wake of any member of the community, a number of animals belonging to the dead man (cows, bulls, goats, sheep), the meat of which is divided among those attending the wake along with the corresponding drink, which in these days is rum but in times past was chicha.

[767] The reason given for the sacrificing of animals during a wake in answer to the question is that this is done in deference to the guests and especially to those whom we could call "professional mourners," who spend all day and all night moaning over the corpse. But on observing certain practices and particularly certain taboos regarding the meat of these sacrificed animals, one has to think rather of the ritual character of the sacrifice.

262 764 983 982 It is a fact that the relatives — sons, daughters, nephews [and nieces, sobrinos], brothers [and sisters, hermanos] etc. — of the deceased cannot eat the meat of animals sacrificed during the wake or during the later ceremony of secondary burial, as this, according to their belief, would be equivalent to eating their dead kinsman's flesh. This taboo, imposed on the deceased's relatives, serves to prove to us — so far as it is possible to deduce — the ritual aspect of the sacrifice of the dead man's livestock, stock which on being slaughtered takes on the same untouchable or magical quality, which the individual takes on when he disappears from the world of the living and enters the universe of the dead. [42] To put this more plainly, the animals sacrificed are contaminated by their dead owner.

[765] The untouchable quality of the animal sacrificed at the wake or in the ceremony that accompanies the second burial is supported by the following fact. The belief exists in La [843] Guajira that if during pregnancy the mother or the father of the 753 future child is present at the exhuming of a corpse, the child is born sickly, suffers from permanent diarrhea and night sweats, 755 and gets more and more pale and progressively thinner. Its 765 illness continues to get worse, and none of the familiar remedies have the desired effect. The parents then resort to the following system of curing (a system which with some variations is also common among the people of the town of Santander). They wait until there is an exhumation ceremony, and then

[42 cont.]

755 765 they put the child inside one of the animals sacrificed for the occasion, taking care that the body of the animal is still warm, with the object that the child enter in the warmth.

If they cannot take the sick child to the place where the ritual ceremony is to be performed, the parents take a bone of the sacrificed animal, let it dry, and later cook it in a large quantity of water, with which they subsequently bathe the body of the child. The successful effect should be attained at the first bath or after several successive ones.

755 There is another system of curing this sickness, which the Guajiro call "the chill of the tomb." The presence of the parents at the wake has infected the unborn child with the coldness of the tomb which the dead man is about to occupy. For this reason, the important thing is to drive out the cold, for which they resort to the substitute (when there is no possibility of an exhumation ceremony in the near future) of digging a hole in the earth, approximately the size of the child, placing him in it and then covering him up to the neck with the displaced earth.

755 764 978 In any case, as can be seen, the second method is no more than a substitute for the required and definitive remedy. In the first case there are two magic associations: the participation, passive and involuntary, of the dead man in the transmission of the sickness; and the other, more active, of the cure through the sacrificed animal, which, as we noted, participates in the taboo by virtue of the sacrifice. If it were simply a matter of the cold-hot association, that is, if the idea were to drive the cold out of the sick child's body, the most practical and rapid way would be the third, that is, to put the child's body in an excavated hole and cover it with the displaced earth, so that heating by the sun may bring about the desired effect, particularly if one takes into account the high temperatures that are reached during [43] the day in the semidesert of La Guajira. But there is something more; there is the magic character of the ceremony of the sacrifice — which is undoubtedly diminishing through the effects of acculturation — but of which there remains at least the idea of utilizing the magic power of the sacrificed animal, or part

[43 cont.]

755 of the same – the bone which is left to dry and then cooked –
764 which also participates in its power, because in the primitive
798 mentality the part is accepted as the whole, or at least shares in the power of the whole, even at a distance.

556 Another meaning that the sacrifice of animals has is that
436 related to the status of the individual in his other life. One of
437 the points of reference of status in La Guajira is wealth, which is nearly always equivalent to the possession of a larger or lesser number of heads of livestock. Livestock represents, in certain aspects, Guajiro currency, since interchanges, blood payments, etc., are always based on a definite number of heads of livestock, besides of course necklaces of tuma, gold, etc.

556 Naturally, if an individual occupies a certain social posi-
764 tion in life, it is logical that when he goes to the other life, to
775 the world of the dead, he occupies an identical position or tries to better the one he had in life. This, then, is one of the reasons why certain of his possessions are placed near or in his tomb, and to complete his "equipment" for the next world, a number of animals are sacrificed, the higher his position in society the greater the number, so that these may give him the desired social position in the world of the spirits.

764 The association, then, is easy to establish: If the individ-
775 ual in dying passes to a new life similar to the one he led on
825 earth, then the animal, a living being with a soul like the man, on dying must also pass on to occupy a place in the other world. This, of course, is only our own supposition. But we find no other explanation of the Guajiro statement that the animals should be sacrificed so that they can accompany their owner to the other world and give him an advantageous position among the other spirits.

764 The sacrifice implies above all an act of magic. The fact
784 that the dead man's close relatives must not eat the meat of the
798 sacrificed animals, because it would be like eating the flesh of their relative himself, establishes the relation between the owner and his property in the sense that the latter shares his personality. And as the dead man is sacred, or at least taboo, that is, sacred in the sense of being untouchable, so also are the things that he owned; the animals – which are [44] to accompany

[51 cont.]

fear, or admiration. The primitive has not at this stage reached the discernment necessary to establish the logical relation between phenomena and their real causes, but establishes a magic relationship that in the majority of cases does not correspond to any concrete or objective reality.

This manner of thinking and of feeling is especially reflected in the facts related to the individual himself and his organic reactions and, essentially, in the variations to which his organism is susceptible in the biological or pathological sense. To the primitive sicknesses are not ills caused by pathogenic germs (we say this in the general sense as there are some exceptions) or by internal or external disorders but are the result of the harmful actions of some being — animal, human, mineral, or vegetable — who is the sick man's potential enemy or one whom he has injured in some way or another, especially in violating the social ritual arrangements which at first were related almost exclusively to the totem and which then gradually evolved toward diverse forms of magic which lead him to a real investigatory curiosity.

This curiosity is not limited, as might be expected, to the simple act of knowing what phenomenon or what individual spirit might have caused the sickness, but sets out to understand the whole matter in order to put into [52] practice a method of cure — it does not matter of what kind — which will bring one back to the state of health, to normality, and remove him from contact with the dangerous world of the spirits.

For this reason, in the following pages we shall find ourselves confronted with this phenomenon: if the causes of the sickness are magic or, in more general terms, supernatural, the methods of curing applied must be of the same type. The world of the spirits is considered to be superior to the normal world of the living, because it is unknown or partially so. The struggle then, face to face, of individual against spirit will be unequal because the latter — the spirit — is aided by supernatural forces with which the living are unacquainted. For this reason it is indispensable that shamans should be called in — the intermediaries between man and spirit, or that he employ, when

[52 cont.]

753 lacking this support, certain practices of a magic character
●755 which place him – always respecting due proportions – on a
*756 plane of equality with the spirit or at least give him the possibility of warding off its harmful effects from him or his fellows. In the methods of healing, as will be seen as we progress in this chapter, the individual makes use, either directly or indirectly through an intermediary – the medicine man in this case, of the benevolent powers of the instrument causing the sickness, or else those of another spirit – under whatsoever materialization – as strong or stronger than the original cause of the sickness, in order to banish the illness.

755 The value of the Guajiro shaman, or medicine man, as
*756 a curer, as we were able to observe in Chapter II, lies in the superiority conceded to him through his constant communication with the world of the spirits, which places him, so to speak, on a plane of equality with them. Nevertheless, in the aspect of Guajiro medicine four different factors intervene, which we can define in general as follows:

1) Medicine practiced directly by the shaman through his communication with benevolent spirits.

2) Medicine by divination, dependent or independent of the shaman, which creates another social group, not so clearly defined: that of the diviner.

757 3) Medicine which might be called household, independent of the shaman and of the diviner, which is applied through pragmatic knowledge of the curative value of certain plants, or through the observation of particular customs related to taboo, which as we shall see later, are of a preventative type.

174 4) Medicine practiced by foreigners. This last factor must
648 have its origins in ethnographic history, and it appears to us
*756 quite difficult to clarify. It deals with the medical intervention of curers from the [53] Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, whom the Guajiro consult in certain cases. These inhabitants of the Sierra belong to native groups included by Professor Rivet in the large Chibcha linguistic family (38). Our supposition of contacts between

38. Rivet, Paul. Conferencias dictadas en el Instituto Etnológico Nacional

[54]

*756 787 The shaman also has this power of divination at times, and he, as well as the others, can foretell deaths and other events that will happen. The shaman by reason of his known inherent powers inspires more faith in his prophesies, especially as these practically never fail to be fulfilled.

*756 791 One of the functions of a diviner who divines by means of tobacco, for example, is to decide at a gathering of shamans to which he is expressly summoned whether a certain individual shows definite symptoms that he will become the host of a spirit of the same class as their own. This diviner generally is not a graduate shaman but is a man or woman of great experience in this type of "science." The diviner places the tobacco or manilla, in his mouth and a burning firebrand in his right hand, which he moves up and down while he discourses; he watches it fixedly and gives his verdict in accordance with the variations he notes in the burning stick. This verdict is considered final.

● 755 *756 787 Shamans in some cases learn the art of divination by the use of a glowing brand to find out, in the event of their being called to cure a sick man, whether they should take the case or not. For the test they take a firebrand; they call on the spirit to come to their aid. They remain with the brand in hand, without blowing on it, and carefully observe the different changes which occur in it through the action of the flame, and from these changes they deduce what will happen. If the firebrand goes out while they are watching it, it means that the sick man is going to die, and hence his presence will not be required.

787 The ceremony of divination by means of fire must be carried out at night never by day. There are diviners who make use of a burning reed or cane for this ceremony. They hold it in the hand and do not take their eyes off it, paying close attention to the changes in the flame, if any, in the blazing up or dying down of the ember, and any other variations they may see. According to all these details, they decide on what divinatory acts are called for and what should be used to locate lost objects or stolen animals. The diviner endeavors to trace the process of the actual robbery in the flame and after that the route the lost object took until he discovers its whereabouts, so that he can state where it is and who was the thief.

[54 cont.]

787 But what is most interesting is that each person in La Guajira can learn the signs that determine divination according to the different methods that make this art of prophecy possible, and make use of them in order to help anyone who may ask his aid or to satisfy his own curiosity about many things he desires to know. The women are especially greatly addicted to divinatory arts [55] to find out from a distance what their absent husbands are doing or what may happen to them when they are far from home. The process is as follows: First the tobacco is lit, then a special prayer is recited asking that what is occurring, or is going to happen, be revealed. Then the woman starts to suck on the tobacco and to observe most carefully every change in the tobacco once it begins to burn. For example, if it emits sparks this means that the person about whom the divinatory enquiry is being made is going to receive money; if it opens in the middle it means that the husband is ill; and he is gravely ill if the ash goes black. Other characteristic signs show when the husband has taken another woman and when he is with her.

This circumstance, that any ordinary person can learn the known methods of foretelling the future, is one which interests us at the moment because it appertains to the aspect of medicine we are investigating. These diviners, usually women, are the ones who, in these cases, decide what kind of illness
● 755 is attacking the patient — a child — and how it was contracted,
753 (generally by direct contamination through the mother during her pregnancy from an animal that had touched food eaten by her). By the same token, they decide what curing methods must be followed to free the patient from the illness from which he suffers.

To clarify this point we quote several pertinent examples taken from our field notes.

753 It is said in Nazaret, and it is a belief extensively ac-
825 cepted all over the peninsula, that a bird called soche, which is accustomed to withdraw to the Sierra de Macuira during its hours of sleep, is harmful to the native inhabitants when it flies over their homes, as it is a carrier of bronchitis, which it spills on to the roofs of their houses, from whence the children of the home pick up the contagion and die.

G [55 cont.]
755 When the child at birth, or a few days afterward, is afflicted with stomach-ache and other characteristic symptoms determined by divination, the cause is that the mother during her pregnancy had imprudently eaten a watermelon which previously had been tasted by a fox. This fact having been proved by the art and talent of the diviner, she proceeds to carry out the cure of the infant, which consists of searching out a fox, killing and quartering it, separating the bones from the flesh and burning them and reducing them to powder. The powder resulting from this calcination is used to anoint around the child's anal sphincter after an evacuation. A part of the meat of the dead animal is roasted and is given [56] to the sick child. If both remedies are applied at the opportune moment, the child will rapidly recover – at least this is the Guajiro belief.

G It might be thought that in this case it would be logical
753 for the affected person to be the mother herself, as it was she
854 who ate the contaminated fruit, but one must bear in mind that to the primitive, the infant, as with us, is a relatively defenseless being. For this reason he requires greater protection, because evil things, due to his weak defenses, will readily make a prey of his small body. The evil things in this case are represented by the wicked spirits whose object is to spread sickness. To uphold our statement it is sufficient to quote the case of the
W Witoto Indians, inhabitants of the Amazonian selva, with their
846 social institution called the covada [couvade] and their general custom of covering their children's bodies with curly vegetable fibers to disguise them and give them the appearance of small monkeys. Let us see what couvade is: "The one most concerned with this affair" – the birth of the new child – "is the husband because it is he who has to bear the rigors of the strict diet involved. In practice, once natus est homo and the essential obstetrical duties are carried out, the Indian mother hands over the fruit of her womb to the husband. He takes charge of the infant and, acting as if he were the mother, takes it with him to his hammock where he stays for eight days, keeping to a diet which might well be adopted by the most fastidious lady. But before he does this he first of all puts on mourning, that is, he paints himself

W 854 291 [57 cont.]
a wooly substance from another tree which is very similar to the balso. So dressed, the infant Indian, lifted onto the bare shoulders of its mother or clinging to her knees, appears in reality very like a small monkey. With only this savage dress, these Indians are quite happy." ... (40)

40. Anon. Op. cit., 2d, I, 37.

W 854 The missionary is right when he compares these children to small monkeys. The idea of dressing the child in so peculiar a costume is not just to protect him from the vagaries of the climate, or to dress him with greater or lesser aesthetic taste, but to safeguard him from evil spirits by means of this disguise, which constitutes a veritable transformation of his physical personality. The child on being dressed up in this extraordinary covering is really changed into another being, so that the evils he might attract to himself lose their effectiveness since the spirits are deceived by the substitution that has been made.

G 755 A method of curing very similar to that we have just described is the one used when a newborn child shows signs of intestinal trouble and diarrhea, evacuating something like spittle. The woman who is acting as diviner discovers by her art that the sickness attacking the infant is due to its mother G [753] having allowed a duck to eat part of her food. For this reason the child passes its fecal matter in a way similar to that of a duck. How does one proceed, then, to restore the infant to health? The feathers around the anus of the duck are plucked out, burned, and the ashes are reduced to powder. As soon as the infant's bowels have moved, his mother must clean him carefully and then apply the powder of the ashes of the feathers around his anal sphincter. If the diviner's diagnosis has been correct, the child should recover quickly on the application of the prescribed remedy. [58]

G [843 753 755 If during her pregnancy the mother should eat fruit which has been previously pecked at by any kind of bird, the child on being born will have stomach trouble and his excrement will be similar to that of the bird. The Indian women who are

[58 cont.]

755 expert in these sicknesses and who devote themselves to applying the remedies and divining the causes of such illnesses indicate by what bird the fruit which the mother ate was contaminated. Once the origin of the sickness has been determined, they proceed to carry out the method of cure which entails hunting and capturing the bird responsible, which, once killed, is roasted, and the meat fed to the child. A sancocho [stew] is also prepared, using portions of the bird, a good part of which is fed to the child. With this medicine the infant should be quickly cured. If this does not effect a cure, the divination has been incorrectly made, and it was not that kind of bird that pecked at the fruit eaten by the mother during her pregnancy. The whole process must therefore be done over again to discover with absolute certainty what animal caused the child's sickness.

843 753 If a pregnant woman should eat the meat of a hen that has been killed by a sparrow hawk, the child will be born sickly, his excretions will be green, and his crying will be like the cry of a hawk. When they do not know the origin of the sickness, they 755 apply home remedies or those of any local curer [curandero]. If [757] these do not bring about the desired effect, then they must turn to divination. The diviner will decide that the mother ate the flesh of a chicken that had been killed by a sparrow hawk. The curing method will follow a similar process to that previously noted: a hawk is found and killed; a leg of the creature is taken, and the bone is well cleaned and allowed to dry. When it is sufficiently dry it is boiled, and the child's body bathed with the resulting infusion.

262 825 842 888 The meat of such a hen — contaminated by the hawk which had eaten some of it — is also harmful to children in general, boys and girls, and also adults. Every time it is eaten it causes sterility. For this reason the magic taboo on this meat is lifted only for the old and the very aged who have already lost their procreative powers and in consequence have nothing to fear in this respect.

756 Household medicine. This system of medicine, which, as we have said, is independent of shamans and diviners, is based above all on the practice of certain magic practices directly

[58 cont.]

755 associated with some prohibitions of a taboo nature or with established social customs, the origin and in part even significance of which is unknown. But what attracts our attention in this aspect of Guajiro medical [59] practice is preventative rather than curative nature. To demonstrate this, we quote some examples:

753 755 843 During the period of pregnancy, neither the father nor the mother should be present at the exhumation of the dead, a ceremony which the Indians hold to comply with the rites of the secondary burial. If this injunction is disobeyed, the infant about to be born will, at birth or a few days later, have a sickly appearance and will be afflicted with constant diarrhea and night sweats, and will be characterized by a very pronounced paleness and extreme thinness.

755 If this occurs, if through carelessness the parents witness the exhumation of a corpse during the mother's pregnancy and her child is born sickly, they will not try to blame the child's illness on any other cause than that just stated. In accordance with this decision, they will proceed to apply the curing method appropriate for such an emergency, which, as we noted in the previous chapter, "Magic and Sacrifice," is as follows: (a) They wait until there is a fiesta of a ceremonial nature for the exhumation of human remains and then place the infant inside the recently opened body of the animal that has been sacrificed for the ceremony. (b) If the infant cannot be taken to the place where the ceremony is being held, a bone of the sacrificed animal is taken, left to dry, and cooked, and the infant is bathed in this water. (c) If there is no possibility of a ceremony of the type described being held in the near future, a hole is made in the sand, and the child is buried therein up to its neck and is then covered with the loose earth.

843 845 764 [177] Neither should the husband of a pregnant woman under any circumstances dig a grave or assist in the construction of a vault (an element of acculturation) destined for the primary or secondary burial of any person. If he does his wife will suffer the consequences of this disrespect in her delivery, which will not be normal: prolonged for several days, very painful, and with serious consequences for the mother and for the coming child.

[59 cont.]

843 845 A pregnant woman should never be present at or watch a burial, for if she does so, she will have a difficult childbirth: the infant's arrival will be delayed in a manner both painful and difficult for the mother.

755 758 784 Anyone who may have touched the corpse of a person whose death has not been natural – who has been murdered, for example – is prohibited from approaching the side of one who is sick, because this individual will die because of his presence. This prohibition is also extended to those who have directly assisted in the exhumation of human remains. Furthermore, both of these persons are strictly forbidden to come near [753] children [60] or places where they may be, because their presence, contaminated by the nature of the dead, will cause the children to fall ill.

843 825 Serpents also have magic influence on pregnant women. In this case it is not an influence destined to injure the unborn child but is directed against the mother herself, who feels in various ways in her own flesh the malignant action of the reptile. For instance, if a woman during her term of pregnancy sees a hunting snake [culebra cazadora] and remains looking at it for some time, her child will be born stupid. The explanation that the Indians give for this very generally accepted belief is that as this snake gives the impression of being stupid, because it does not attack people as other snakes do and does them no harm but confines itself to hunting young birds for food, it transmits this quality to the infant. A mother who encounters such a reptile should pretend not to have seen it and automatically look elsewhere.

825 843 845 If during this same period the mother-to-be should see any kind of snake (other than a hunting snake) she will suffer a miscarriage or some kind of painful mishap related to the delivery. To avoid these possible ills, the woman should try to step over the snake. If in spite of this difficulties in childbirth occur, then they resort to a curing method which consists in finding a similar snake, killing it, opening it up carefully, and localizing in the interior of its intestines the water that it has drunk, collecting this and taking it to the sick woman, so that after she has drunk it, her labor will be hastened and will then occur without any serious complications.

[66 cont.]
according to which "things which have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed." (45) [Cited in Spanish.]

45. Frazer. La Rama Dorada, [The Golden Bough], III, 27.

There is another medical preventative, also of a magic nature, taken to avoid infant mortality in Guajiro marriages after the death of the first-born child. This preventative obliges them to bury the body in a certain manner. It also imposes upon the mother a further seclusion, such as she underwent on reaching puberty (ceremony of initiation), and entails her taking certain medicines extracted from vegetable roots. If all these prescriptions are not fully complied with, her future children will die successively as soon as they are born.

Once the child is born, the placenta must be thrown a long way away from the house and completely lost to sight. If it is buried it will bring bad luck to the child, who in consequence of such an imprudence will live a weakling and suffer greatly until his death.

When only two or three days after the mother has given birth, her breasts badly swell with severe pains and a lack of milk, her husband must place his foot on her naked breast, pressing lightly on it, with which treatment the woman will recover. When a mother loses her milk after a long period of breast feeding and is no longer able to nourish her child, she must be struck on her shoulder and her breasts a number of times with the branches of a plant which is found mainly in the neighborhood of [67] Puerto Estrella and which on being cut emits a white liquid.

The Guajiro takes great care of any of his hair which has been cut off, as he is afraid that it can be used to do him harm. This fear is based on the belief that if anyone can obtain possession of a lock of hair, whatever harm he may do to this will react directly on its owner; if that hair, for example, is thrown on the fire, its original owner will suffer a similar fate:

[68 cont.]
714 of the soul is uniform, so also the effects of all things are magically related to one another." (46)

46. Born. Fetiche, Amuleto, Talisman [Fetish, Amulet, Talisman], p. 3.

This polydemonism of which Dr. Born writes, or spiritism as we have called it, can be seen more clearly in the life of the Guajiro communities in the chapter which deals with the [764] aspect of funerals. All the ceremonial relating to the dead is filled with this belief [69] in the universal soul and in the survival of a personal soul after death.

755 In the chapter we are dealing with we see it also clearly established, especially in the curative methods followed by the shaman, or medicine man, who seeks the assistance of his protector spirit or spirits to find out the kind of illness the sick man is suffering from and the manner of eradicating it from his body, as well as in certain aspects of household remedies consisting of preventative methods. In no way different are the 764 taboo prohibitions related to the dead, the burials and exhuma- 783 tions in general, animals sacrificed in funeral ceremonial, and 784 persons who have been in contact, directly or indirectly, with the dead by assisting in the burial or exhumation of human remains, in digging graves, in imprudently gazing on the placing of a burial in the grave, etc., all of which contaminate with the essence of the dead, who by his very nature, by the act of having passed to a higher life situated on a plane of superior potentialities to that which he has left, is converted into something dangerous, sacred or impure, as the case may be, and for this reason contaminating.

751 This contaminating action of the dead also appears in the aspect of medicine since they endeavor to avoid possible harm 775 to children before birth and therefore to pregnant women or those in actual childbirth, because, as we have already seen these are the most likely victims of the malevolent action of spirits. Children especially receive such influences through their parents when they are in the mother's womb and have such poor means of self-defense.

[69 cont.]
of self-defense. If we take into account the high infant mortality among the Guajiro population, which reaches a very high rate (32.97%) according to the data collected by the investigators Virginia de Pineda Giraldo and María Rosa de Recasens, whose findings were published in the Boletín de Anqueología (47), we

47. Pineda Giraldo Roberto. "Informe preliminar sobre aspectos sociales y económicos de la Guajira [Preliminary Report on Social and Economic Aspects of La Guajira]."

can even better explain the series of prohibitions, of patterns established to protect the future mothers and unborn children from the malevolent influence of the spirits, whether of humans, animals, etc.

On the other hand, we can deduce from this study the following points: 1) Medicine practiced by shamans, intermediaries between the two worlds, is carried out almost exclusively on adults, for whom they prescribe the curative methods they deem essential in accord with the patient's illness. 2) On the other hand, curing by [70] divination, which we have called household curing, using a common term, has its field of action among newborn babies and mothers-to-be. 3) In this last type we encounter an extremely interesting fact, the ambivalence of certain animals, represented by their double capacity to cause illness and at the same time to cure it. 4) In the application of household preventative medicine, magic called sympathetic is frequently practiced. 5) In one of the accounts we find the occurrence of the magic action of a plant. This deals with the plant used to make the mammary glands secrete their milk after a mother had lost it and the child still requires to be breast fed. As the plant is able to produce milk, the mother by contact with it will inevitably be able to do the same, according to native belief. This aspect has been fully treated by Castiglione in one of the chapters of his work Encantamiento y Magia [Enchantment and Magic]. We wish to quote only a few paragraphs which will better clarify

[70 cont.]

208 the magico-curative value of the plant under discussion: "Some-
757 times," says Castiglione, "as has been said, this popularity" (that of medicinal plants) "is derived from real therapeutic qualities as, for example, the use of quina roots, which is prescribed by scientific medicine; its power to cure intermittent fevers was well known among the peoples of pre-Columbian America. In
208 many other cases the virtues of these plants depend on their ap-
755 pearance, on the similarity of their roots, their flowers, or their fruit to certain characteristics of sicknesses or to some organ of the body." (48) Somewhat earlier, in referring to this second

48. Castiglioni, Op. cit., VI, 82.

category of plants, he tells us: "The second category embraces innumerable substances which by themselves, speaking objectively, cannot in any way have any effect, either favorable or unfavorable, but whose value stems exclusively and directly from the ideas they provoke in the minds of the people concerned." (49).

49. Castiglioni, Op. cit., VI, 81.

The influence of magic in medicine is borne out, finally, by the custom of visiting the Arhuaco doctors, in whom they see powerful magicians who possess the secret of praying to a powerful spirit to impregnate their remedies with its essence. It is this aspect which attracts the Guajiro, not the plants in themselves but the spirit, the demon if we may call it so, that is present in the drops which have been prayed over by the Arhuaco curer.

[71] V

Magic and Funerals

811 With the Guajiro Indians, as with the majority of primitive peoples, the complex ceremonial relating to death accounts for a great part of their activities, their manner of acting, thinking, and

[87 cont.]

858 greater protection than the adult as, owing to his limited defensive capacity, illnesses can readily take possession of his body. We made reference in that section to the malevolent action of certain animals as well as the influence of the dead, the contamination exercised by their spirits on conception and on small children. And now we return to refer especially to this last aspect. We also saw how the harmful effects of animals centered especially on unborn infants due to carelessness on the part of pregnant mothers or of the husbands, and this is repeated equally with regard to funerals.

[164] When the grave destined for a dead person is opened, small children who go to the funeral, relatives of the deceased, must pass in file over it with the object that death will be delayed and will not overcome them while very young.

843 When speaking of sacrifice (cf. Chapter III) as well as
853 when speaking of medicine among the Guajiro Indians in its magic aspect, we quoted the general belief in La Guajira, which
[171] is known also as an aspect of folklore in various parts of Colombia, among them Santander and Nariño, that if during pregnancy, the father or the mother of the child to be born has been present at the exhumation of any human remains, the child will be born sickly, will suffer from diarrhea, night sweating, paleness, and loss of weight. The characteristic of something touched by death which the corpse has makes it contagious and, so to speak, contaminates the mother of the infant, who because of his weakness is incapable of resisting its influence. If in this case one considers the folklore aspect, the explanation which is given is that the cold of death has affected the child through the person of its mother or its father in the presence of the corpse. The explanation in the case of Guajiro appears to
755 us to be somewhat more complicated, as we had occasion to show above, although the curing processes tend in reality to extract the cold of death from the body of the child after it is born. The method of curing considered infallible by them is to bury the child in the still warm carcass of an animal sacrificed [88] during a wake, and only when there is no such possibility do they make use of the substitute, the bone, or of burying

[88 cont.]

755 the child in the warm sand, covering it to the base of its head. There is a decided magic intervention, the effect of which we 782 do not know on the part of the sacrificed animal which, as we 825 have said, shares the contaminating quality of its dead owner.

Other beliefs which confirm what has been stated are the 843 following: The husband of a pregnant woman should never, for 845 any motive whatsoever, dig a grave or assist in the construction of a vault for either a primary or secondary burial ceremony, because in such a case his wife's delivery will not be normal; it will be prolonged with danger both to the mother and the child.

Neither should the mother-to-be watch a burial being placed in a vault because the previously mentioned phenomenon will be repeated: She will have a difficult delivery, through delay in the birth and pain.

783 Anyone who has touched a man whose death was not due 753 to natural causes must not come near a sick person because if 764 he does the sick man will quickly die. This also applies to those who have helped in an exhumation or taken part in any of the ceremonies called for by the secondary burial. Neither should such a person go near small children because these will, according to Guajiro belief, automatically begin to cry and twist about, the victims of some sickness.

In general terms, the individual who approaches a corpse, who touches it, or who participates directly in the different ceremonies relating to it becomes contaminated. But he does not suffer the consequences of this contamination in his own person, unless it be a pregnant woman; he takes on the role of transmitting agent. He becomes an intermediary, if we can so call him, between the spirit and children, sick people, or pregnant women, which are the three classes of people preferred by the spirits of the dead on whom to practice their malevolent contaminations. In all three cases the weakness of the contaminated person is evident: the sick person, the child in the womb unable to defend itself, and the newborn also incapable of defending itself against the spirit as it shows in contrast to the other members of the community, that is, the adults on whom it depends for its

[106 cont.]

782 424 789 Magic prayers. As a matter of interest we transcribe below without any comment the following statement we recorded: there are a few special prayers only known to certain natives, the verbal formula of which they sell at times to whoever may need it, on the understanding that these prayers will be used in all good faith and belief in their magic power, prayers that serve to cure whatever plagues may occur, and frequently do occur, in the cotton fields.

538 789 755 Magic charms in the oral literature. From the stories we were able to collect among the Guajiro natives relating to their daily life, there is one that has a clear connection with magic charms. It is the one which refers to the struggle of the Indian Kurĺta-Páta, of Jarara, with some Kusina Indians who had come to rob him of his livestock. In this struggle the Jarara Indian was wounded in the thigh, and his cure was effected through a dream in which it was communicated to him that he should swallow a charm (a tuma, "a precious stone") and leave his wife to exchange her for a slave. Kurĺta-Páta obeyed these injunctions and was cured.

We have then a new magic charm which has a medicinal function and which must be added to those we have already noted throughout this chapter. Its magic action is combined with a social act of great importance within the Guajiro community: that of a man leaving his own wife and replacing her with a slave, descending thereby in the social scale, as there is [567] a great difference in status between a free woman and a common slave or bond servant. A new magic object, the tuma, appears as the possessor of supernatural powers capable of warding off those evils that can overpower an individual.

789 Summary and classification. 1) What we have called magic charms [contras mágicas] in this chapter include three classes of known magic objects: fetishes, amulets, and talismans. [107]

2) All these possess in greater or lesser degree a magic power capable of working either good or evil.

3) Their action in the majority of cases can be controlled and directed by their owners, especially in the case of doing ill

[117 cont.]

[187] reprisals from their opponents. One of our informants, a married woman without children, told us that on one occasion she dreamed she was going to have a male child. A short time afterward, her group, the Uriyú, became involved in a fight with the Epieyú, who were much stronger; several members of her group were killed, others sought asylum in the Capuchin convent, and the majority emigrated to Venezuela in order to avoid greater disasters.

When the action of a dream represents the sacrifice of a steer, and the dreamer is accompanied by a person of a different clan, the interpretation given is that the dreamer will perish at the hands of one of the family group that appeared in the dream with him. During our stay in Nazaret we attended the funeral ceremony of a woman who was found dead one morning, seemingly hanged from a forked pole in the interior of her home. It was soon established that she had been murdered by her husband, who had brutally beaten her and who, to avoid punishment for his crime, had fixed her body to appear as if she had hung herself. One of the relatives of the dead woman stated after the occurrence that some days before the woman had had a dream similar to what we have just described.

Furthermore, to dream of convalescing from any kind of sickness indicates that the dreamer will suffer [118] from the [188] sickness dreamed of. To avoid this, he must arrange an exorcism, which consists of the celebration of the fiesta that would be given when a sick man has recovered from such an illness and has become convalescent, that is, a chicha-maya dance at which, at the expense of the man who would have suffered the sickness, chicha and meat are partaken of by all who attned.

With respect to the foretelling of interclan wars, which appears to be an obsession among the Guajiro Indians, in addition to what we have noted above, we have an indicator dream, when the dreamer sees a great flood of water washing away everything in its path, devastating everything that comes within its reach, and carrying the dreamer away with it. He, however, is able to save himself from drowning in the flood by grasping some plants growing on the bank or a log floating in the stream.

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
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The medicine men liked to have a good drink before a seance

A piache, *or wise woman, curing a boy by burning him with a red-hot arrow head*

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[facing p. 113]

7;Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
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must be no intimate association with women, not even with a wife! 756 787

The spirit has not merely accepted the novice as a piache, but has entered into him, possessed him and will accompany him during all his magical seances. As a person a piache is of no importance, but when the mighty spirit fills him he becomes the equal of the real spirits. He cures the sick exclusively by supernatural means, with the help of the spirits. Of real medicine he knows nothing. According to the Indians' ideas there are no natural causes of illness and death, which are ascribed entirely to dangerous spirits. [833] [755] [753]

When a piache is summoned to cure a sick person, he must be given a gold necklace or some other valuable gift. He brings with him two maraca rattles, the usual magical instrument of the South American Indians, and a stool shaped like an animal. If necessary, he can sit on some other stool. One of his magical instruments is small pellets made by someone with a great knowledge of herbs and formed like goat's excrement, which are intended to attract the spirits.

While the piache is in his trance everyone must remain silent, otherwise the spirit may take fright and leave the piache's body, at which he will fall to the ground in convulsions and be ill. The piache chews tobacco all the time, and with the resultant magical saliva he smears his patient's body and often the walls and roof of the hut as well. He sings a song, invoking the spirit and sucks the parts of his patient's body that hurt, thereby drawing out the cause of the illness: poisoned spirit arrows that have been shot at the sick person's body. [755]

Usually the piache is alone with his patient, but sometimes he will allow a near relative to be present and help. The songs the piache sings are about how his own spirit is seeking everywhere for the patient's. The demon of the illness has gone off with it and holds it prisoner. When the demon is found, it is forced to release the patient's spirit against a ransom. For this the piache demands cattle, goats or sheep with special markings or ornaments, cloaks, etc.

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

accuse an animal of spreading the disease. A certain bird is considered dangerous, spreading, as it flies over the hut, bronchitis and coughs, which in the first place attack the children. A child's illness is often ascribed to something that happened to the mother during pregnancy. If a child gets a pain in its stomach, the wise woman may say that this is because a spirit ate some of the mother's food before the child was born. To deal with this, duck feathers are burned and the child's behind smeared with ash. In other circumstances it is because a fox has nosed at something the mother subsequently ate. In that case a fox has to be killed and the child given some of its grilled meat, at the same time as the child's behind is rubbed with burned fox-bone. The child will get quite better—if the old woman is right and it was a fox. These women are quacks even in the Indians' eyes, and yet they turn to them first.

If an animal is sick, the piache himself is at once sent for. The cattle are driven into an enclosure and the piache dances round and among them, wearing his head-dress, torso bare, and brandishing his maraca, singing song-spells and spitting tobacco juice upon the animals. After some days of this, the treatment is concluded with a chichamaya dance.

The Guajiro, of course, believe in dreams. During sleep the spirit frees itself and learns things of which it knows nothing while the individual is awake. Because of this it is considered risky to neglect warnings or things of which one has dreamed.

A piache attaches special importance to his dream-experiences and knows how to interpret them. If he dreams that a snake bites someone, it means that that person will be struck by a poisoned arrow. If he sees fire in his dream, that indicates fever, while violent rain denotes the death of some rich Indian. Blood in a dream also means death, and an animal being butchered means that a person of the same age or sex will die. If the piache dreams that an enemy intends to kill a specific individual, he hastens to visit the person to help him. An animal of a certain colour is killed and the threatened individual smeared with its blood—

8:Armstrong & Métraux E-4 (no date) 1948
SC13 Goajiro SC13

over the novice as he (or she) lies in the hammock twisting and groaning as his spirit takes possession of him, imparting knowledge and power. 756

In attempting to cure, a shaman often causes greater injuries to the patient; permanent blindness may result from his effort to cure eye injuries with caustic powders or to remove foreign substances with horsehairs or cactus spines. Tuberculosis is treated by inducing expectoration and prescribing a meaty diet. Dysentery is cured with herbal medicines. Well-chewed tobacco or tobacco-laden spittle rubbed over a painful area is a common method of therapy. If the medicine man effects a cure, which he frequently does, he is rewarded with gifts of cattle, rum, etc. No attempt is made to treat smallpox, the victim often being abandoned to his fate. 755

Some practitioners who are not exactly shamans divine by burning a bundle at the end of a stick or by examining the bottom of a bottle, i.e., by crystal gazing (Hernández de Alba, 1936, p. 42). 791 787

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